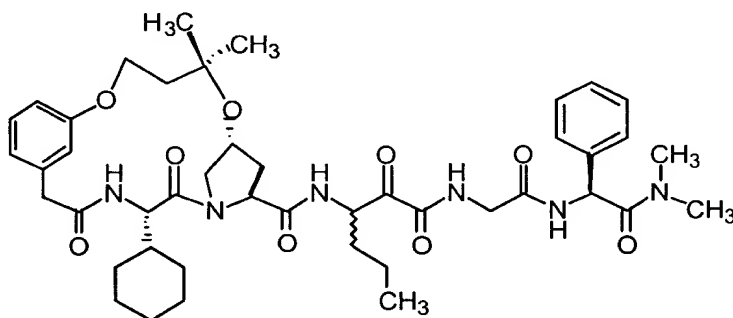


REMARKS

Claims 1-36 are pending in the case. In the restriction requirement telephonically conveyed to the undersigned Attorney-of-Record on July 2, 2003, the Examiner restricted the invention into two groups: Group I (Claims 1-27, 31, 32 and 33-36) and Group II (claims 28-30). Furthermore, a requirement to elect a single species for prosecution purposes was also established then. In response on July 7, 2003, by facsimile, applicants provisionally elected, with traverse, the invention of Group I, and the following compound:



which occurs in claim 31 as well as on page 385 of the application. Applicants further stated that claim 28 should properly be included in claim 1, since claim 28 pertains to a method of treating disorders associated with the HCV protease using the compounds of claim 1. Claims 28-30 were withdrawn by the Examiner as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

This present communication from Applicants affirms the provisional election.

In the present Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 31-33 and 36. Claims 1-4, 6, 8-10, 12, 26, 29 and 34 were rejected, and claims 5, 7, 11, 13-25, 27, 28, 30 and 35 were objected to as being dependent on rejected claims. The Examiner found the elected compound (shown above) allowable and therefore rejoined all other compounds representing obvious variants of the claimed invention as well as claims 28-30.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-10, 12, 26, 29 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for various informalities. Applicants regret the informalities and have corrected those informalities in

this response. Applicants additionally corrected another informality (two "wherein") in Claim 19.

Claims 26 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for claiming use. Claims 26 and 29 stand canceled in this response.

On page 1, lines 1-5 of the specification are now amended to include claim of priority to the provisional application that was filed on April 5, 2000.

There being no other rejections pending, Applicants believe that claims 1-36 as amended are in allowable condition. Such an action is earnestly requested. If the Examiner has any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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